



RECEIVED MAY 9 2 2006

Adams Conservation District

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

402 East Main
Ritzville, Washington 99169-1338
Phone & Fax: (509) 659-1553
E-mail: adamcd@ritzcom.net

Dennis Swinger
Curtis Hennings
Ron Hennings
Emmitt Cain
Eric Maier

4/22/2006

To: Mark Clark (Executive Director)
Washington Conservation Commission
PO Box 47721
Olympia, WA. 98504-7721

Subject: Washington State Conservation Commission Cost Share Policy

In response to recent phone calls, e-mails, correspondence and supervisory discussions among several other eastern Washington Based Conservation Districts we feel the recent decision to establish a precedent that approves material purchases that are on hand prior to the initial start date of a grant contract does not take into account the savings one can achieve from investing in bulk purchases. This decisions will result in a direct and substantial cost increase to the public and should be reconsidered due to the impact it will have on future cost share programs.

In response to an EPA and DOE request, this district has been working for the past 12 years developing an excellent implementation program that has required years of patience, information and education meetings and newsletters; all attempting to gain the confidence of area ranchers "just" to begin a phase where this district can assist in the environmental protection of our areas lakes, streams and rivers. During the past few years we have seen the cost of steel (which relates to "T" posts, corner posts, "H" frames and barbed wire) rise proportionally to a point where every rancher considers bulk purchases due to the pace at which prices have increased. In 1997 we were paying \$1.86 locally for heavy duty 6' steel "T" posts! Today that same post cost in excess of \$4.50 per post from the Ritzville Cenex Coop "before" it went out of business this month! Because our producers currently have over 100 miles of 5 wire barbed fencing to install, just to meet state compliance standards, our producers have been researching the most cost effective means for achieving the best return for the investment and today many are purchasing bulk lots to meet the material requirements. While potential exists that most of these purchases could fall within the time frame being identified, this decision change exempts a reduced rate for materials that may have been purchased prior to the development of a new contract. This CD currently is in receipt of several EPA-DOE contracts for several hundreds of thousands of dollars and to tell our producers the commission now will not honor some of these bulk purchases has raised the anger level of a few producers. While the CD can assure you the paperwork can easily be "created" to meet this rule change, the decision to do so is only going to generate some innovative ranchers to find a source

CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF-GOVERNMENT

This paper has been RECYCLED and is RECYCLABLE!

for "new found" wealth which to date has easily been controlled by your local supervisors acting in a responsible manner.

This cost share reimbursement decision to be made for items that only are incurred during the agreement dates is a counter productive and non efficient method for utilizing our hard earned competitive cost share dollars and we strongly object to the manner in which this particular top down decision making process is being conducted. For what purposeful reason is the state so strongly supporting such an ill conceived goal? We feel that this policy will reduce landowner participation in cost share programs and it will definitely result in a view of the conservation commission as becoming a "not so friendly" agency to work through. Our current projects now are focused upon an area that extends from Kahlotus, Washington (Franklin County) to Cheney, Washington (Spokane County) in length and a width that encompasses Lacrosse, Lament, Winona, Bengie, Hooper, Sprague (Lincoln County) and Ritzville (Adams County) and only includes less than 20 producer-landowner types! To purchase trailer loads of steel from Portland Oregon or Salt Lake, Utah requires an investment of over \$20,000 for each load and some of these ranchers will have substantial investments and years of inventory before all their fence objectives are completed. The Department of Ecology, FSA, NRCS all recognize the savings one achieves from this process and support such activities. It is time for the Olympia decision makers to step outside and look at reality rather than some pre-conceived rule that will only penalize conservation minded producers that are willing to commit their own resources for our future! Being fiscally responsible is the way most of our people want to be recognized! This policy does not promote that objective and there appears to be no logical reason that we can identify the reasoning that should not allow us to show saving when savings can be achieved! Lets not make this material acquisition issue become a negative aspect for us to promote natural resource protection. We always thought that the WCC was put in place to support our efforts not hinder us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Curtis R. Hennings". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Curtis Hennings Chairman